

## Southeast Region

# Hurricane Katrina Report

September 8, 2005



The Service's Incident Management Team based in Lacombe, Louisiana, continues to expand its community service activities (clearing roads, establishing emergency corridors, etc.) throughout the local community, the Gulf Coast, and the North Shore of Lake Pontchartrain. The Service team is beginning to expand its mission to include debris clean up around public sites such as schools, hospitals, police departments, court houses, etc. We estimate that nearly 150 Service employees deployed within the various missions in our agency are participating.

The Service is continuing to provide support (food, water, fuel, a safe place to spend the night) to local police, fire departments, Red Cross volunteers, and law enforcement engaged in search and rescue efforts in New Orleans and throughout the impacted area. This facility is also providing 200 meals to support a local hospital and began feeding 100 Marines yesterday.

The boat search and rescue operation based at the Mandalay NWR in Houma, Louisiana is working under the guidance of the St. Bernard Fire Department. The Service's Southeast Region Office of Law Enforcement agents are continuing to work with the FEMA search and rescue efforts throughout the disaster area.

On Wednesday, CNN Political Contributor Donna Brazile appeared live on CNN's Situation Room and made an emotional plea for help to find her sister, Sheila Brazile. Sheila lived in an assisted living facility in New Orleans and had not been heard from since the storm hit. During Wolf Blitzer's interview with Donna, an official with the Fish and Wildlife Service in Louisiana sent a boat to the last known place that Sheila Brazile had been seen. It was in a flooded area of New Orleans that had not yet been visited by rescuers. Fish and Wildlife officials found Sheila and five other people in this building. They had no food and no water but are now safe. Donna Brazile said without the



USFWS/Tom MacKenzie

*FWS crews open up roads and parking for Louisiana Heart Hospital, Lacombe, Louisiana.*

CNN interview and efforts of FWS rescuers, her sister would have probably died.

Also Wednesday, another group of FWS employees were working on search and rescue activities with the Louisiana Division of Wildlife and Fisheries. As they were finishing up search and rescue attempts for the day, they witnessed a helicopter crash onto a nearby roof top. The group responded to assist in the rescue of the two occupants in coordination with their air lift out by another helicopter. During this same rescue mission, a Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries airboat overturned while they were responding to the helicopter crash. We also assisted in the rescue of the airboat crew. FWS Resident-Agent-In-Charge Bud Oliveri was interviewed by NBC News and the incident was reported last night.

Wildfire is becoming a major concern since there has been no additional rainfall since Hurricane Katrina. FWS assisted in extinguishing four brush fires in the Lacombe area yesterday.



USFWS/Tom MacKenzie

*Rocky Chesser, a fire fighter from Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in Georgia, works in Louisiana.*

### Additional information

Media contact coordination is being handled by the Regional Office of External Affairs 404/679 7287.